

Stock Department.

Mules vs. Horses.

While horse breeders are sounding the praises of thoroughbreds, trotters, Percherons, Clydesdales and all the best of strains and breeds, claiming untold good qualities for the one and the other, we seldom hear a note in favor of that useful animal the mule. On the farm, on the road, amid the hum of cities, in the very bowels of the earth these patient, persevering, long-lived "hewers of wood and drawers of water," are plodding through their daily drudgery, unbonored and unsung. We once overheard a farmer say with a quaint expression: "The best horse for a farm is a mule," and we subscribe ourselves a champion of his fate. Do you want an animal that will serve you without growl or balk—and which will keep fat on short commons, never need the veterinary, always be ready for work? Do you want a great big burley brute that will catch a coal wagon on his shoulders and tow up a hill, or a little sprightly fellow to plow corn or to do chores, or to make himself generally useful? If you do, get a mule. He will require less care, will cost less money, will do more work, will eat less corn, will live longer and pay you better than any horse we know of on the farm.

Now it will be said that mules move slowly, that they are tricky, that they are frequently breechy. Some mules have none of these traits, and some have them all; but their good qualities, taking them all in all, very far surpass their bad ones. Who ever saw a spavined mule, or curved mule, or a dead mule, that had not been killed by accident?

A man may live a lifetime, he may have gone through the wars, where horses laid down and died by the score, from bad treatment and starvation, but I venture to say he can count on his fingers the number of mules he ever saw yield up the ghost under any ordinary pressure.

We sing our paeon to the mule only as regards his usefulness on the farm. We do not claim that he is a trotter, though we remember to have seen some very lively steppers, nor that he would be a success on the running turf. He is certainly not an object of beauty, and would make but a poor show in a gilded coach or a lady's phaeton. He is intended for use, and not for ornament. His place is where the laborer toils through the long day, planting and cultivating and gathering and generating the produce of the fields. He eats no corn he does not earn. He is an animal of "business," and goes right along slowly but surely, looking neither to the one side nor the other.

We confess a liking for the mule. There is something honest about him; he sails under no false colors; he puts on no airs; and he is just a little better at ten or fifteen years of age than he is at five or six. His principal growth from year to year is in dignity, wisdom and ears. He never forgets anything he learns. He soon learns all about a corn row. The darkies can ride him at night without his seeming to suffer for it; and if every horse on the farm has the "epizootic," you will find that the mule—if you have one—is as calmly prepared for every emergency, as ever. Yes, when it comes to business, we like a mule.—Illustrated Journal of Agriculture.

SOUTHDOWN SHEEP.—Hon. John Wentworth, of Chicago, a large stock breeder, as well as politician, in a recent circular, says:

"After trying all kinds of sheep, we have given the preference for general utility to the Southdowns. Upon fair grounds they are ranked as middle-wooled. They are half way in quality and quantity of wool between the common sheep and the best Merinos. But their mutton is the best in the world, and their wethers grow the largest and command the highest prices in all the markets. The day is not far distant when all our beef and pork will be demanded for Eastern and foreign markets. The West must live upon mutton, and that of the fine woolled sheep is far from being palatable. Hence it is desirable that our farmers at once lay the foundation of a Southdown herd. Besides being the best of all food, there is no other that can be raised so cheap as Southdown mutton; as they are the hardiest, and can be kept in large flocks better than any others. The wool will pay for the keeping, thus leaving the carcass clear profit. For crossing upon the larger breeds of sheep, there are no superiors to the Southdowns."

FARMERS' VINDICATOR, \$2 a year.

Uses of Salt for Cattle.

A correspondent of the Mark Lane Express, calls attention to the great improvement in the health and general condition of animal that would result from a more liberal use of salt in their food. He says:

"The presence of salt in sufficient quantity protects the animal economy against abnormal changes in its chemical constituents. Its deficiency subjects the beast to the attack of disease germs. Dr. Carpenter declares, 'chloride of sodium is needed for the conservation of the organic components of the blood in their normal condition'; and Liebig states that, 'the other (3 out of 6) oxen, which daily had salt added to their fodder, remained healthy, even in the mode of life to which they were confined, which corresponded but little to their nature; and with excess of food and deficient exercise, their blood remained pure, and well fitted for all the purposes of nutrition. In the salt they had a powerful means of resistance to external causes of disturbance to health, which in the actual circumstances, was indispensable to them.' 'The body of the others' (which had no salt added to their food) 'was, in regard to disease like a fire place heaped with the most inflammable fuel, which only requires a spark in order to burst into flame and be consumed.'"

Although common salt is added to the food of cattle and sheep, it is questionable whether it is given in the required quantity to compensate for the loss incurred by the daily excretions; since, as Dr. Carpenter states: "this salt is itself required as a component, not only of the solid tissues generally, but also of all the secreted fluids; and 'excretion of urea, the ultimate product of organic change of matter, by the kidneys has a closer relation with the presence of common salt in the blood, than is generally supposed.' On this point the same eminent savant further says: 'In the oxen which had only as much salt as was contained in their fodder, the quantity was insufficient for the secretory process. There was wanting the means of transport for a number of substances, which, out of the body excite disgust; their whole frame, the blood, flesh and all the juices were loaded with them, etc.' Allow me to repeat: for want of sufficient chloride of sodium to determine their expulsion from the system. It is however not the administration of common salt, but especially the manner in which it is to be given to the cattle to which I beg to draw the attention of farmers and cattle-owners. The salt should be dissolved in water (about two ounces to the gallon), and the cattle should have no other but salted water to drink. So taken, the salt will be absorbed into the system much quicker than when mixed with food; and it will not produce abnormal thirst."

The Best Breed of Swine.

When I first considered the importance of changing my stock of hogs, the question presented itself, what I should select, as breeders all claimed their stock was the best. So I concluded to commence on the Magie—large, coarse, white hogs, with a few spots on their bodies. But after a careful trial, I was convinced that this was not the hog that would suit me, so I crossed them with the Poland-China or Butler county hog. This added some good qualities to the Magie stock, but did not improve in any respect the Poland-China.

The pigs were strong and grew rapidly, but did not fatten even. Some that were bred in the Poland-China blood were fat and ready for market at ten or twelve months old, and the rest of the lot had to be kept until nearly eighteen months old. So with this result I thought it best to continue my experiments, so I selected some of the best Poland-China blood, then added to it the improved Berkshire, and soon found that I had gained the point of my experience. I began to increase the size of the Berkshire, and still left their superior fattening qualities. So I fed this cross long enough to satisfy me that they are the hog for the farmer who does not pretend to breed pure strains.

But I have come to the conclusion—after carefully investigating the different theories of breeding—that no crosses breed as perfect and evenly as one strain in its purity, so I have directed my undivided attention to the Berkshire. My breeding stock is imported, and I find my pigs are strong even when young, and remain so till fattened. So, in conclusion, I will just say the Berkshire is my hog, for I have found from experience that they are the most profitable of all breeds.—Cor. Am. Swine Journal.

Large or Small Hogs.

A correspondent asks whether we recommend large or small hogs for the farm. If we were disposed to make a recommendation, the mere size of a breed of hogs would be one of the last things we should consider, for the purpose of the farmer is, or should be, to feed hogs for profit, not to see how large a growth he can induce. We should not send hogs to market weighing less than 200 to 250 pounds, as hogs of less weight are not always in demand at full prices, because not suitable for manufacture into all kinds of product, while hogs ranging from 200 to 250 pounds, with exceptional weights above this figure, are suitable for nearly all purposes, and always meet with a good demand at full rates. We should in selecting hogs for the farm, therefore, keep these weights in mind, as a starting point, with a desire to do as much better as possible. If we found a breed of hogs which would reach these weights with a consumption of less food per pound than another breed of hogs, we should regard it as preferable; no matter if the other breed of hogs were much larger. But if another breed of hogs consuming less or the same food per pound, would attain a greater weight, we should take the large hog in preference, and the heavier he was the better we should be pleased. In other words, we should not regard, as the great desideratum, the number of pounds a hog could pull down on the scales when sent to market; but on the contrary, should regard as the most profitable, the hog that represented for each pound of weight the least corn.—Live Stock Journal.

A Good Plan for Raising Hogs.

MAJOR WALL: With your permission, I will give my plan of raising hogs. Sow rye and oats in the fall for winter, and early spring grazing. Fence four lots, say two acres in each lot; plant in whip-poor-will peas, as early as the weather will admit; as soon as the first lot comes in, turn your hogs on it; as soon as they eat off the peas, turn them on the second lot, and plant the first over, and go on in rotation, raising two crops on every patch, and three on the first. If the farmers of the State will try this plan, they will build up their poor land; for the pea is about the best sub-soiler that can be put in the earth; for with its long tap root, it brings to the surface rich plant food that lays buried deep in the earth.

Now, if there be any doubting Thomases among the brother Patrons, let them try the plan, for I know success will crown your efforts; and you will be able to furnish the poor-houses of Mississippi with meat, and be as independent as our friend who settled in the woods without going through those heavy night sweats, splitting rails by moonshine.

Yours fraternally,
P. M. GATLIN.

Canaan, May 3rd, 1875.

KEEPING FLIES FROM HORSES.—A hundred or more remedies have been given to keep flies from annoying horses, but the right one has not been found yet unless Rochard, a French veterinary surgeon, has hit it. His method consists in painting the inside of the ears, or any other part especially troubled, with a few drops of empyreumatic oil of juniper. It is said that the odor of this substance is unendurable to flies, and that they will keep at a distance from the parts so anointed. If this treatment should accomplish the alleged result, it may perhaps be equally applicable in repelling mosquitoes from the faces and hands of tourists and sportsmen, when passing through woods or meadows.

Will some of our readers try the above and give the result through this paper?—Ed.

WHEN TO WATER CATTLE.—The usual time to water cattle or horses is after feeding in the morning, a little before and after feeding at noon, and before feeding at night. These times are most convenient, and are probably as good as any other time that could be chosen. Copious watering at any one time should be avoided.

TO REMOVE GARLIC FLAVOR FROM MILK.—A correspondent of the American Agriculturist says that wood charcoal is an excellent absorbent of the disagreeable flavor of garlic in milk. He uses it every spring by dropping a piece three or four inches thick into each pan of milk.

Horticulture.

Use of Tan as a Preventive for Melon Bugs.

In the January No. of the American Farmer appears an article with sundry letters from correspondents on "Emploi du Tan Contre le Puceron Foir du Melon," from which it appears that spent tan-bark employed as a mulch on the melon hills, has prevented the destructive effects of these black melon bugs. It is proper to say these experiments had reference to melon culture under glass and one of the most interesting of the series of letters on this subject contains the following resume from one grower and the detailed experience of others:

1. "Since the year when the puceron noir (black vine frotter) appeared in the culture of the Cucurbitaceae (melon and vine family of plants, cucumbers, etc.,) at Paris and elsewhere, no means tried had been completely successful, and the crop was more or less compromised according to the time when the insects make their appearance.

2. The employment of fumigation with tobacco, even repeated every day, even syringing with water of nicotine, were only palliative.

3. The fresh tan (moist and fresh from vats I presume) that I have used like straw as a mulch, (winter and spring of 1872 and '73) in forced culture, has been a remedy completely efficacious; it is due without doubt to the evaporation of the tannic acid concentrated under the sash."

The same writer further states that in the season when dry weather follows, no evaporation occurring from the tan, the puceron coming again to their work, watering the tan, with closing the sash, the bugs are all found destroyed in a few hours from a removal of the evaporation by the sun's heat. The covering of the hills by the tan should not be too thick, from which some had experienced injurious effects, and the editor remarks that "the use of tan is good; what is bad is its abuse, (too much) and who knows, but that with dressings made from this water of tan bark, we shall not be able to rid ourselves of pests which have heretofore resisted infusions of tobacco or of black soap," (possibly carbolic acid soap).

Just here and in conclusion permit the writer to observe that he has found the best remedy for bugs on the melon family of plants to be, selecting new land for the crop, avoiding for two years lands that have grown the crop, plaster and hand-work the young seedlings as soon as through the ground, repeat the hand-working around the plants and plastering after each rain, look over the melons every few days, until they are sufficiently strong and well established as to withstand all attacks made by our sap-sucking melon bugs.

Shortening in Peach Trees.

Wherever this has not been done yet, it can be done now, and that with less regret than when we see the trees full of blossom buds. Here the crop will be a slim one at best, and therefore a heading back will not be much loss in the crop for the present year, while the advantages gained for the next are of considerable importance.

A peach grower once told us that to head the trees in the spring had a tendency to make the fruit of that summer rot; whether or not he was correct in his opinion, we have not yet observed. Another says, do it in the winter when the weather is very cold. This latter might not injure the trees or the succeeding crop, but we are inclined to think it would not be very pleasant work. Our faith in the non-pruning of even peach trees, is growing stronger; that is, if we would watch and pinch the points of the ranker growing shoots during the summer. This we are convinced is the correct theory in the apple and pear; and we believe that unripe wood when full sets in, and over-luxuriant growth in summer, are the main subjects for the pear blight. Pinching the tips of fast-growing shoots, at once checks them and causes the wood to ripen before another can strike out. Some head back their pear trees severely in the spring, which causes them to put forth strong upright shoots again, unless the tree bears a full crop of fruit, and as a rule heavy growths are averse to much bearing. But by pinching the tips in the summer, they have a tendency to form more blossom buds, and we all know that after a fruit tree has attained a proper size, we want it to bear well.—Rural World.

The Vegetable Garden.

Hoe, hoe, hoe, should be the watchword of the gardener this month, for unless the early vegetables are pushed now, they will never attain a satisfactory perfection at maturity. Not only must the grass and weeds be kept down, but the soil must be kept loose and permeable for the air and dew. Ammonia is the greatest of all stimulants to plant life, and this stimulant reaches the feeding rootlets of the growing plant more copiously through the medium of night air, dews and light misty rains, than in any other way. It is easy to see therefore, how important it is that the surface soil be kept in proper mechanical condition to absorb the various fertilizing gases. And we may also, from this fact, learn why it is better to stir the surface of our garden plot early in the morning while the dew is on the ground than to delay our hoeing until the sun has dissipated both the dew and its condensed ammonia.

Melons, squashes, beans, egg-plants and all over-tender vegetables may yet be planted, and such as have been sown too thickly, transplanted. This operation, if carefully done in cloudy weather or in the evening, and the soil around the plants thoroughly saturated with water, will result satisfactorily in nearly all cases, giving as good, and sometimes better vegetables than those unmoved. Onion seed for "sets" should still be sowed, and will produce better keeping "sets" than the seed put in the ground a month ago. Cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, egg-plant, and even beets and carrots, should now be set out in permanent plantations and frequently cultivated.—Rural Alabamian.

How Fruit Should be Cared For.

George S. Park, of Parkville, Mo., an experienced horticulturist, in discussing the question of sending apples to Galveston, gives the following excellent advice to fruit growers and shippers:

Now a word to fruit growers and shippers. Apples for shipment must be carefully picked by hand, not bruised handling, assorted most carefully and pressed in barrels after they have gone through a sweat and kept as cool as possible, say thirty-five degrees above zero.

Shippers must expect to suffer loss if their fruit is shaken from the trees, bruised and mixed—good, bad and indifferent. Such will rot quickly in a hot climate, and should never be shipped. You must send honest packages or suffer the penalty. Loss always follows ignorance or carelessness. Buyers should refuse all apples carelessly picked and badly handled, and learn the fruit grower to do his duty if he does not know it.

Too little attention has been given by growers to long keeping shipping apples. Those designed for the Southern market in spring, should be kept over winter in the cool North, just above freezing, and where cool air can come on them so as to prevent sweating or too much heat, opening at night when warm.

OATS AND STRAWBERRIES.—A correspondent of the Practical Farmer recommends sowing down oats as a mulch for strawberries. He sowed the oats broadcast all over his strawberry patch about the 15th of September. Their growth is of course small at first, and does not interfere with the strawberries. When it has made a larger growth it is of course checked by severe frosts and afterwards killed by the winter, when it falls down over the plants, making a complete and sufficient covering till spring, when the young plants readily push through it.

CABBAGE WORMS.—A correspondent of the New York Tribune gives the following method of killing off the green cabbage worm, which our readers may find sufficiently valuable to pay for preserving until time for applying another season. Dissolve one teaspoonful of saltpetre in a common pailful of warm (not hot) water, and sprinkle the cabbages therewith on the appearance of the worms. Two or three applications will suffice for the season. The water, besides, acts like a charm in promoting the growth of the plant.

A Sacramento paper says that Dr. Hugh J. Glenn, of Jacinto, Colusa county, Cal., has raised and harvested the past season on his own farm 600,000 bushels of wheat. This would load eighteen 1,000 ton ships.